



**Semi-Annual Technical Progress Report
Agents de Protection de la Nature Project
USAID Grant No. 687-A-00-98-00029-00
January-June 2000**

Abbreviations and Acronyms

APN.....	<i>Agents de Protection de la Nature</i>
CO	Central Office
FA	Forest Agent
FR.....	Forest Reserve
FSU	Forestry Support Units
GAA.....	Government Aid Agency
GELOSE	<i>Gestion Locale Sécurisée</i>
GPS	Geographic Positioning System
LDI.....	Landscape Development Initiatives
MPO.....	Madagascar Program Office
MWF	Ministry of Waters and Forests
PCV.....	Peace Corps Volunteer
PFM.....	Participatory Forest Management
WB	World Bank

1. Introduction

The *Agents de Protection de la Nature* (APN) Project is funded by USAID grant number 687-A-00-98-00029-00. The Project's second phase began in 1997 and is due to close at the end of 2002. It is essentially a community forestry project which focuses on sustainable use of six Forest Reserves in Madagascar's humid forest zone. Major activities during the semester included:

- < logistical arrangements and technical training for Project start-up at two new sites,
- < an accent on village territory zoning at the Antsiraka and Tolongoina sites,
- < demonstration and practice of improved agricultural techniques, and
- < support to village-based groups and associations.

2. Project Background

The APN Project is one of two projects managed by the WWF-Madagascar Program Office's Debt-for-Nature program (the other being the Forestry Support Units or FSU Project). Both projects essentially operate as one at six sites in Madagascar's humid forest zone:

- < the Tsitongambarika Forest Reserve just north of Fort Dauphin,
- < the Vondrozo Forest Reserve west of Farafangana,
- < the Tolongoina Forest Reserve to the south of Ranomafana National Park,
- < the Antsiraka Forest Reserve on Madagascar's eastern coast directly opposite Sainte Marie island,
- < the Ankarahaka Forest Reserve north of Maroansetra, and
- < the Andravory Forest Reserve 60 km southwest of Vohemar.

Approximately ten APNs and two FSU agents are posted at each site and are supported by regular field visits from Central Office technical staff who are based in Antananarivo.

The Project activity targets for the semester were as follows:

- a) Conduct two workshops for local Forest Service agents, decentralized office coordinators and FSU agents on Project administrative and financial procedures and the new Malagasy Forest Policy, *Gestion Locale Sécurisée* (GELOSE) and participatory forest management,
- b) Continue work on formulating draft village forest management plans and presenting and discussing these plans with villagers,
- c) Finalize at least two more village forest management plans and submit them to the Ministry of Waters and Forests for approval,
- d) Continue work on zoning village territories including taking Geographic Positioning System (GPS) coordinates of territory boundaries,
- e) Demarcate and inventory at least one village forest,
- f) Finalize and facilitate signing of at least two management contracts,
- g) Continue work on preparing and submitting (to Central Office) small and micro village-based development project request documents,
- h) Interview and hire new FSU agents, a Communication Officer and a Geographic Information System and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer,
- i) Post APNs and FSU agents at the Project's two new sites and initiate participatory forest management activities at these sites,
- j) Implement and monitor the management plan for the Farafara (at Tsitongambarika) village forest,
- k) Train field teams in small project conception,
- l) Train selected Central Office staff in environmental impact assessment methods,
- m) Implement at least three small village-based development projects (if possible, one each at

- Antsiraka, Andravory, and Tolongoina),
- n) Procure necessary field equipment for the APNs and FSU agents,
 - o) Conduct a meeting of the Project's steering committee,
 - p) Continue the work of recording the latitude and longitude of points along the forest reserve boundaries using Geographic Positioning System instruments,
 - q) Put an accent on work on village territory boundaries, zoning of village territories and formulating *dina* (traditional, local agreements) in at least one village per site,
 - r) Continue work on establishing village-level forest management associations and committees, and
 - s) Write and submit semester reports to WWF-International, WWF-US and the FSU donor.

Significant achievements or progress during the semester included the following:

- < approval of a seventh Project village forest management plan,
- < improved monitoring by villagers of the Antsiraka Forest Reserve (FR) (including seizing illegal forest products),
- < improved comprehension by field teams of the management plan process for entire forest reserves,
- < a collaborative agreement signed with the GELOSE unit from Madagascar's National Environmental Office, and
- < commencement of non-timber forest product studies at the four original Project sites.

3. Project Goals

General goal: Improved management of Malagasy forests.

Long-term goals: The Malagasy Forest Service will be capable of supporting villagers in the GELOSE process and in forest management, and the villagers will be able to independently and sustainably manage the forests for which they are given responsibility, thus re-establishing an equilibrium between man and his environment.

3.1. Objective 1

To reinforce the intervention capacity of the Malagasy Forest Service at the field level.

3.1.1. Expected Results

- 1) Forestry Agents (FAs), FSU Agents and APNs are trained in forestry techniques and in participatory forest management.
- 2) FAs, FSU Agents and APNs are able to provide technical support to villagers.
- 3) APNs and FSU Agents are either incorporated into the Civil Service or their salaries are assured in another manner by the Waters and Forests Ministry.

3.1.2. Progress Towards Completing Objective 1¹

Introductory Training for Two New Field Teams

The Central Office (CO) technical team conducted two two-week introductory trainings for the field

¹ Activities reported under the four objectives below are incomplete as reports from field teams had not arrived at the Central Office at the time of writing this report.

teams at the two new sites (Ankarahaka and Vondrozo). This training included background information on the Project's logical framework and its participatory forest management approach as well as Madagascar's new forest policy and its *Gestion Locale Sécurisée* (GELOSE) law. The trainings focused, however, on a methodology for collecting baseline information in the villages surrounding the Forest Reserves (FRs), analyzing this information with villagers, and facilitating the emergence of village structures ready to address identified problems. During the trainings, the field teams practiced the methodology in one village outside of the Project site and then in two villages at the site.

Training in the new Malagasy Forest Policy, Participatory Forest Management, and GELOSE

In March, the Debt-for-Nature Program organized a training in Antananarivo for field personnel from all 6 sites. This included regional and local Waters and Forests agents, FSU agents and decentralized office administrative staff. In total, 40 persons participated. The first week of the training focused on Madagascar's new forest policy, the GELOSE law and the participatory forest management approach. Trainers comprised CO technical staff and personnel from partner projects and institutions. An introduction to the training was provided by the Director General of the Ministry of Waters and Forests. Examples of partnerships with other rural development actors were also presented. These included collaboration with the USAID-financed Landscape Development Initiatives (LDI) project and the Malagasy environmental foundation, *Tany Meva*. USAID also gave a presentation on its environmental program in Madagascar.

Training in Administrative Procedures

The second week of the training in Antananarivo was devoted to administrative aspects. The same 40 persons participated. The objectives of this training were improved understanding and proficiency with regard to existing administrative and financial procedures. Training subjects included accounting, budgeting, development of small project dossiers, equipment maintenance and reporting, and personnel policies. CO administrative staff conducted the bulk of the training with some support from the technical team and other resource persons.

Lowland Vegetable Gardening Training

At Tsitongambarika, the field team and 12 villagers (mainly from women's groups) participated in a training in lowland vegetable gardening techniques. A local NGO (Fafafi) conducted the training.

Training in Beekeeping

One of the Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) collaborating with the Project at Tsitongambarika trained the field team and four villagers in improved beekeeping techniques.

Participatory Training/Exchange in Improved Rice Culture

At Tolongoina, the Project, along with a partner project (LDI), sponsored an informal training on improved rice culture techniques. This consisted of a visit to a demonstration site and a discussion and critique of the techniques on display; approximately 80 villagers, representing most of the villages around the FR, participated. The discussion was facilitated by a consultant who had worked with the field team and villagers to establish the demonstration sites.

Small Project Conception and Formulation Training

The CO training officer conducted trainings in small project conception for 4 field teams (4 original sites) during the semester; the decentralized administrative staff for these sites also participated. Training subjects included project identification, work plan formulation and proposal formulation. Field teams are expected to use this information when they collaborate with village associations and

groups on specific rural development initiatives.

Other information on informal, on-the-job training is noted under Objectives 2, 3 and 4 below.

3.2. Objective 2

To implement the process of Participatory Forest Management (PFM).

3.2.1. Expected Results

- 1) The status and evolution of the forestry potential of the Project sites are known.
- 2) Villagers are able to work together for the management of village forests.
- 3) Management plans for the Forest Reserves and the village forests are produced in collaboration with the villagers.
- 4) The management plans are implemented.
- 5) Improved and sustainable harvesting techniques as well as silvicultural regeneration methods are employed in the forests.

3.2.2. Progress Towards Completing Objective 2

Support for Establishment of Village Associations and Management Committees

The bulk of progress on this subject occurred at Tolongoina during the semester. The field team at Tolongoina worked with the elected management committees in three villages (Ambodivanana, Sahamaloto, et Andrambovato) to establish association by-laws and agreements (*dina*); these were later presented to and discussed with a general assembly of the associations' members. They also facilitated the establishment of village associations and their elected executive branches or management committees in three other villages and discussed the establishment of these structures in a fourth village. As a follow-up to last semester's training in association organization and operations, the team met with two management committees to evaluate the training and to remind the committees of the roles that they needed to fulfill in order for their associations to develop. Additionally, the field team at Antsiraka facilitated official recognition of three village associations and also worked with a fourth association on preparing the necessary documentation for this recognition.

Village Forest Management Contracts

At Tolongoina, the team worked on finalizing the first draft management contract for the village of Malazamasina; this was then sent to the regional Waters and Forests office and the CO for comments. The team at Antsiraka sent the two contracts that it drafted last semester to the local mayors for comments (n.b. these mayors will be signatories to the contract). The team also conducted an awareness-raising meeting on management contracts and the management transfer process in one village.

Collaborative Agreement with National GELOSE Unit

The CO technical team was able to establish a collaborative agreement with the unit in the National Environment Office responsible for promoting and implementing the GELOSE law/process. This required several meetings and some negotiation and revision of the draft agreement. The agreement includes provisions for validating contractual work already done by the Project, training local actors in the GELOSE process, and sending environmental mediators (required by the GELOSE law) to the Project sites. The first trainings of local actors are due to take place in July.

Village Forest Management Plans

Village forest management plans form the basis of the management contracts between the villagers and the State. They also provide one of the first opportunities of village empowerment as the villagers themselves, at the draft management plan stage, choose which management alternative to implement. At Tsitongambarika, the field team presented and discussed the draft management plan alternatives (for the village forest) with the villagers of Tamboro. As the forest presented limited commercial possibilities, they chose the objective of managing the forest for local needs only. This choice was then communicated to the CO staff who subsequently began work on finalizing the management plan. The Antsiraka team worked on collecting final information on the Manjato village forest so that the CO staff could also finalize this management plan. In Antananarivo, the CO technical team finished two draft village management plans (1 for Andravory and 1 for Tolongoina) based on inventory and participatory appraisal results. These were then sent to the field teams who will discuss the management plan options with the villagers. Finally, the Ministry of Waters and Forests approved one village forest management plan during the semester, bringing to 7 the total number of approved Project plans.

Participatory Demarcation and Inventory of Village Forests

Collaborating with local communities, the Antsiraka team marked the boundaries of two village forests during the semester. Inventories for these two forests subsequently commenced. At Tsitongambarika, the team remarked the limits of three of the village forests which had previously been defined; this will help to clarify these zones for all involved.

Materials for Selective, Artisanal Harvesting

The Tolongoina team distributed woodcutting tools to a group of woodcutters in one village. This included explaining terms for the reimbursement of the cost of the tools into the village association's treasury. These tools will enable the woodcutters to implement the village forest management plan; more importantly, the woodcutters, and the village as a whole, will begin to earn money from the forest (i.e., through the sale of sawn timber). It is estimated that the villagers can earn 12.000.000 *francs malgaches* (\$1800) per year from selective logging.

Forest Reserve Monitoring

At Antsiraka, encouraging developments regarding FR monitoring occurred during the semester. Three village associations and their management committees were active in monitoring illegal cutting and other illegal uses of the forests in their territories. Overall, five incidents of illegal cutting were observed: this included approximately 230 boards and small diameter logs (80 of these were seized), 2 dugout canoes made from illegally cut trees (both of which were seized), and 33 recently cut trees. Negotiations are ongoing with the local Ministry of Waters and Forests (MWF) agent regarding the auction of the seized materials; in principle, the villages concerned will receive a percentage of the proceeds from these auctions. Additionally, 2 illegal clearings, 1 wildfire and 1 illegal charcoal-producing stove were noted; villagers conducted investigations regarding the persons responsible for these acts. The next step will be to levy fines against the individuals concerned (in principle, this money will go into the association treasury in the villages concerned).

Forest Reserve Management Plans

Formulating overarching FR management plans is a difficult task due to several factors including the relatively slow approach chosen by the Project (participatory management), the limits of the field personnel, and the Project's finite resources. Nevertheless, significant progress is being made with regard to this activity, especially the field teams' comprehension of this objective and how to achieve

it. Overarching plans for the two smaller forests, Antsiraka and Tolongoina should be completed during the next two years. The two larger sites, especially Tsitongambarika with 40 village territories overlapping with the FR limits, present a significant challenge, but with perseverance, the Project team should be able to complete these plans before the Project's termination.

During field trips to Antsiraka and Tolongoina, the CO technical team discussed at length the subject of FR management plans with the field teams. Emphasis was placed on the village zoning strategy as a means to achieve the management plan for each entire site. The teams were encouraged to complete marking of village territory limits as well as the forested parts of each territory as a basis for a draft management plan; the Antsiraka team was reminded that their site was the target for Project's first draft FR management plan (proposed deadline: end of this year). The CO technical team also devised a calendar for achieving FR management plans for each of the six sites. Finally, discussions occurred between the CO technical team and a Geographic Information System (GIS)/GPS expert regarding the base maps for these management plans. Sample maps and management plan outlines were produced in order to facilitate these discussions.

Participatory Rural Appraisals

The new teams at Vondrozo and Ankarahaka completed village reports on two villages at each site. This included an analysis of problems that was presented to and discussed with villagers. The next step is facilitation of the emergence of village structures that can begin to address some of the identified problems (i.e., implement some of the identified solutions). At Tsitongambarika, the team completed PRAs in three villages. Major problems cited included a lack of water for irrigating rice fields, a lack of arable land accompanied by low soil fertility, and the absence of a school.

Presentation of 2000 Work Plan

The Antsiraka team presented their 2000 work plan at a meeting attended by the mayors of the 2 local communes and approximately 25 villagers representing the various associations and management committees. During the meeting the team also reviewed the contents of the GELOSE law, including presentations of example contracts for the transfer of management responsibility.

3.3. Objective 3

To promote behavioral change so that villagers are more protective and conservation-oriented regarding forest resources.

3.3.1. Expected Results

- 1) The villagers are convinced of the importance of maintaining forest cover.
- 2) Wildfires decrease around and within the Forest Reserves.
- 3) Illegal cutting decreases in the forests.
- 4) The area of cleared forest (especially for agriculture) decreases.
- 5) The degraded zones of the forests are rehabilitated.

3.3.2. Progress Towards Completing Objective 3

Village Territory Zoning

At Antsiraka and Tolongoina, significant progress was achieved with regard to village territory zoning during the semester. The Antsiraka team conducted awareness-raising meetings in four villages (employing village maps as a visual tool) and collaborated with villagers on preliminary identification

of two village territory limits; over 300 villagers participated in these activities including traditional leaders. Awareness raising on traditional agreements (*dina*) which will accompany village territory zoning plans also occurred in eight villages. (N.B. these *dina* are extremely important as they include rules on permissible and non permissible activities in each territory zone; all villagers and outsiders who use the territory are then required to follow these rules.) As a result of these meetings, four draft *dina* were formulated; two of these were then presented to general assemblies of the village assemblies; over 450 villagers participated in these activities. The team used an example *dina* from a sister WWF project (the Marojejy project) during this work. Overall, three village territory *dina* were finalized and submitted to the commune mayors for approval. A 100 ha zone for a charcoal producing group was also demarcated; this zone will become a natural forest rehabilitation zone once the dead wood is transformed.

At Tolongoina, the team gathered village territory zoning data in one territory during hikes across the territory. At both Tolongoina and Antsiraka, field trips by CO technical staff focused on village territory zoning. At Antsiraka, this included marking, mapping, and recording GPS points of part of a village territory boundary as well as a forest zone for local use. At Tolongoina, the CO staff discussed the village territory zoning concept and procedures with the Tolongoina team for a day and a half in order to assure that everyone understood the various elements of this subject. Later, the same boundary marking, mapping and GPS techniques were practiced in the field in a pilot village territory. Finally, the CO technical team wrote a revised technical note on marking, mapping and recording GPS points for village territory zoning activities.

Awareness Raising/Extension

Tsitongambarika and Antsiraka were the sites most active in awareness raising and extension work during the semester. The Tsitongambarika team conducted over 25 village awareness raising meetings on participatory forest management and the Project strategy; approximately 350 villagers attended these meetings. At Antsiraka, the team conducted extension meetings on traditional agreements (*dina*) for village territory zoning and management in all villages contiguous to the FR. During these meetings, the team also introduced the ideas of notebooks to monitor *dina* implementation and reforestation plots; the villages will later compete in a contest for the best monitoring which will be based on these notebooks.

Reforestation

The Antsiraka team worked with two women's groups and one charcoal producing group on reforestation efforts: approximately 2,200 cuttings and plants were planted (primarily two indigenous species). The team also provided technical support to villagers who have established two village nurseries: over 1000 seeds of three exotic species were sown. Similarly, the Tsitongambarika team helped one village sow 150 jackfruit seeds in a rehabilitation zone. At Tolongoina, the team focused on promoting reforestation. They conducted awareness-raising meetings in six villages, primarily targeting a reforestation question-answer competition that was scheduled to take place during independence day celebrations (26 June). Consequently, the team finalized the questions (and answers) and also designed a poster to promote the event.

Phenological Observations

Phenological monitoring continued at Antsiraka, Tolongoina and Tsitongambarika. The Tsitongambarika team was the most diligent with each of the four APN sectors choosing two sites for the observations; at each of these sites, 10 species were observed every fifteen days. The Tolongoina team observed five species and noted fruiting in one high-value timber species in mid-January and flowering in another during the first half of February. At Antsiraka, some observations occurred in one

of three APN sectors.

3.4. Objective 4

To improve the standard of living of the villagers through improved management of the Forest Reserves (FRs) and the zones surrounding them.

3.4.1. Expected Results

- 1) Local people gain increased benefits from the forests and the zones that surround them.
- 2) The economic value of the forests and the zones surrounding them increases (i.e., the amount of available economic products from the forests and the zones surrounding them increases).

3.4.2. Progress Towards Completing Objective 4

Small and Micro Village-based Development Projects

Work continued on the small dam project (for irrigated rice production) in the village of Tamboro at Tsitongambarika during the semester. This included villagers supplying gravel and sand from local sources as part of their contribution. Final touches on the dam construction were planned for April, after the heavy rains. The Tsitongambarika team also conducted thematic, participatory surveys in two villages where additional small dam projects are foreseen. At Tolongoina, the team conducted a survey regarding families that would benefit from a small dam project: the result was 15 families (91 persons).

Subsequently, a meeting regarding the organization of village contributions (gravel and sand) to the project occurred. The team also surveyed beneficiary families in three other villages for small dam projects to be financed and implemented by UNDP/FAO; one of the dossiers for these projects was completed and sent to the donor. Finally, the Tolongoina team furnished technical support to a village group whose goal is to improve coffee production: a nursery was established and 0,5 kg of seeds were sown.

Improved Agricultural Techniques

In collaboration with the LDI project, the Tolongoina team was the most active in improved agricultural techniques during the semester. Two villages were monitored regarding improved rice culture technique demonstrations; the team found that there was insufficient weeding and a lack of maintenance of drainage canals. A survey of interested villagers with regard to fruit tree production occurred in one village: four persons expressed interest, especially in grafted orange and tangerine trees and in litchis. A similar survey occurred concerning lowland gardening in one village; a group interested in these techniques subsequently prepared garden beds while waiting for seeds. The team also supported one village in planting rows of two species of anti-erosion grasses along contour lines in sloping fields. Finally, they conducted awareness-raising sessions on the production of off-season crops.

At Tsitongambarika, the team supported women's groups in two villages in lowland gardening techniques; major activities included sowing seeds and replanting seedlings of vegetables such as lettuce and sugar beets. The Antsiraka team monitored an initial demonstration in improved rice culture techniques; they also noted a lack of weeding at the site. A second demonstration plot was also established during the semester.

Non-Timber Forest Products

The Antsiraka team identified and prioritized four non-timber forest products that can be harvested

from the FR. These included reeds and Raphia leaves for woven materials. Reeds were seen as, potentially, the most lucrative product and were thus ranked as the top priority for further studies. Later in the semester, the Project finalized a collaborative agreement with the Geography Department at the University of Antananarivo. In the agreement, the Department will provide students who will conduct research on non-timber forest products at the Project sites; the Project will furnish logistical and limited monetary support for the students. Subsequently, five students were identified and began their studies. They commenced with a literature search including consulting Project documents in Antananarivo. Shortly thereafter, they visited their assigned sites for a two-week reconnaissance visit. A meeting was later held with the students in order to select the exact subject of their research.

Support to Village Groups

There are two main objectives for supporting village groups: 1) to promote better organization at the village level which will facilitate and improve auto-development efforts, and 2) to increase the income of village families by collaborating with an organized entity composed of numerous families (instead of working with individual families). The Antsiraka team was very active in supporting village groups during the semester. They facilitated the establishment of two women's groups, composed of 64 and 37 members, respectively; officers were also elected for each of these groups. The team also conducted extension meetings with four women's groups concerning the quality of woven products (mats, baskets and hats) and informed the groups of the possibility of participating in a regional artisanal fair. Additional extension meetings occurred regarding the creation of three other groups: fishermen, charcoal producers and beekeepers. These groups were subsequently established, officers elected and by-laws formulated. The Tsitongambarika team organized meetings with women's groups and beekeepers in order to help them formulate annual work plans. At Tolongoina, the team facilitated the creation of two youth groups and one rice farmer's group; one of the youth groups later elected its officers and the team helped it to formulate a work plan and a traditional accord (*dina*) among the members. The team also helped two groups and one association produce documents to be submitted to local government authorities for official (and legal) recognition.

Agroforestry

The Antsiraka team monitored one agroforestry demonstration plot (vanilla on live stakes in a homegarden) during the semester. They also conducted extension meetings on multi-story homegardens in three villages and on live fences in another village. At Tsitongambarika, the team began work on establishing a seed orchard for leguminous agroforestry shrubs by sowing four leguminous species next to the office. The Tolongoina team held extension meetings in two villages on agroforestry and soil conservation (visual aids were used during one of the meetings).

3.5. Support Activities

This section is intended to illustrate activities of the Project's Central Office staff. Not all activities are directly related to the Project (but all are related to forest conservation issues at varying levels, e.g., Malagasy and international). Again, this is meant to indicate the myriad demands on the staff's time, especially the Technical Advisor's and the Program Director's. It should be noted that only major activities are mentioned below.

Central Office Technical Team

Support for WWF-Madagascar Forest Program

The Technical Advisor and Program Director devoted a significant amount of time to the activities of the WWF-World Bank Alliance for Forest Conservation and Sustainable Use. In early January, the

Technical Advisor met with Alliance managers in Washington regarding a proposal on forest restoration as well as potential subjects for other proposals. In Madagascar, several meetings occurred with the Alliance country team; one of these included the participation of the Director General of the Malagasy Forest Service. Based on her input as well as that of the Alliance managers, a second proposal was drafted and submitted to the managers for comments. This proposal, aimed at establishing and reinforcing mechanisms for participatory forest management, was subsequently revised and approved for funding. In late June, at the request of Alliance managers, the Technical Advisor and the Program Director organized a meeting to present and discuss buy-ins regarding this second proposal. This included preparing a PowerPoint presentation. Approximately ten donors and technical partners attended the meeting.

During April, May and June, Alliance activities focused on the first approved proposal: developing national standards for sustainable forest management. The first step, accomplished by the Technical Advisor, comprised finalizing and submitting the activity's work plan and budget. Subsequently, numerous e-mails were written and answered regarding the hiring of an international consultant. Announcements and interviews for a national consultant (who was subsequently hired) also occurred; similar activities also occurred with regard to the consulting firm slated to facilitate the workshops. After the international consultant was identified and hired, the Technical Advisor and the national consultant corresponded frequently with him on the contents and organization of the initial regional workshops planned for the national standards activity. Meetings and implementation also occurred with regard to identifying workshop participants and sending out invitations.

Other CO staff activities in support of the WWF Madagascar Forest Program included the following:

- < the Technical Advisor attended a visioning workshop (sponsored by the Alliance) on the future of the world's forests focusing on the period 2000-2050 (result: enhanced knowledge of MPO staff regarding new forest management thinking and trends);
- ? the Technical Advisor presented a brownbag seminar on the APN Project at WWF-US headquarters in late January (result: better understanding of Project activities among WWF-US staff and partner organizations);
- < in collaboration with WWF network foresters, support was furnished to the WWF Madagascar Program Office (MPO) Director concerning responses to Conservation International's vision for the management of Madagascar's natural forests (result: the genesis of an alternative [more pragmatic] vision for managing Madagascar's natural forests);
- ? a proposal for an ecoregion-based conservation program for Madagascar's humid forest was developed and submitted to WWF-Germany (this activity is part of the MPO's 2000-2005 strategic plan);
- < the Technical Advisor wrote a short paper on shifting agriculture (*tavy*) the main pressure on Madagascar's humid forest that was circulated among Antananarivo forest sector partners and which received several favorable remarks (result: increased awareness of the fact that the *tavy* problem cannot be ignored when thinking about forest conservation and sustainable use in Madagascar);
- ? the Technical Advisor attended a World Bank forest policy meeting in Johannesburg, representing the views of Madagascar and the WWF network; a report was subsequently written that was posted on the WWF International Forest Information System intranet site (result: WB forestry staff heard opinions relative to the forest sector realities in Madagascar and the views of WWF);
- < CO technical staff participated in the selection process for the MPO forestry Program Officer; later, a meeting was held to provide some orientation to the selected candidate (result: sharing

- the Madagascar forest sector workload with an additional colleague);
- ? two memos were written and circulated to various partners in the forestry sector regarding the mid-term evaluation of the second phase of Madagascar's environmental action plan as well as the vision for the plan's third phase (result: increased awareness of the WWF viewpoint); and
- < CO technical staff attended meetings on the mid-term evaluation of the second phase of Madagascar's environmental action plan relative to the forest sector, including a meeting where certification, Conservation International's natural forest management vision and conditionalities for the MWF were discussed (result: increased awareness of MPO forest sector staff regarding new developments in the sector).

Contacts with Donor, Partners

As usual, numerous contacts occurred with forest sector partners and the APN Project donor during the semester. Some of the major events included the following:

- < a steering committee meeting for the Debt-for-Nature program attended by a representative of USAID, chaired by the MWF Director for Sustainable Forest Management, and receiving input (via e-mail) from the FSU Project donor;
- ? an APN Project update meeting with a USAID representative in mid-February (result: increased understanding at USAID regarding Project progress and realities at the field level);
- < a forest sector meeting organized by USAID at which the focus was a contribution to the sector by a new AID environmental project implemented by the International Resources Group;
- ? a meeting with MWF officials and two other projects that support the MWF regarding how new CO technical staff (especially the specialist in GIS) could support the MWF's forest information unit;
- < numerous contacts (via e-mail) with the WWF-US Women and Conservation Department regarding a gender analysis training planned for October;
- ? a meeting with Fianarantsoa province forest sector partners on a strategy and vision for the region's forests;
- < a meeting with technical partners (approximately 20 advisors in attendance) who support the MWF mainly on the external evaluation of the second phase of Madagascar's environmental action plan;
- ? at the request of a WWF-Madagascar country team representative, composition of two articles on the WWF-Madagascar forestry program for the WWF-Switzerland newsletter;
- < a meeting with a senior official of the World Bank (WB) on a new WB rural development project (which possesses forest sector elements); and
- ? participation in a field trip to a forest zone attended by various forest sector donors and technical advisors.

Evaluations and Work Plans

The CO technical team also planned for the upcoming field trips to the two new sites during which temporary work plans (July-December 2000) would be formulated. This included a memo suggesting work plan activities and several planning meeting and discussions.

Central Office Administrative Team

Personnel

The CO administrative team organized the recruitment of a communication and a GIS/monitoring and evaluation officer during the semester. This included writing terms of reference, announcing the posts in the newspaper and interviewing candidates for each post (n.b. the CO technical team participated in the interviews). Similarly, three new FSU agents were hired for the two new sites (a fourth woman

agent who had interviewed for the vacant post at Andravory previously, was contacted and accepted the fourth post).

Field Operations Training

The Debt-for-Nature program Administrator participated in a one-week training at WWF-US headquarters in Washington, DC concerning field operations. Training themes included an introduction to WWF-US and WWF core values, operational roles and responsibilities, contracts, financial management, and government aid agency (GAA) projects. Several case studies were presented and discussed during the training. After the training, the Administrator discussed various issues pertaining to the APN Project with WWF-US staff responsible for the Africa/Madagascar program.

Taxes and Public Investment Program

The program Administrator attended several meetings during the semester regarding the injunction against USAID projects paying local taxes on goods and services. It is proposed that these taxes be paid, henceforth, by the government's public investment program. This solution is difficult to implement, however, as local goods and service providers are not inclined to follow the complicated and slow procedures that are required.

Material Procurement

A large shipment of camping and forest inventory supplies arrived from the US during the semester and was subsequently delivered to field teams. The teams also received locally purchased materials such as raincoats and rainpants. The logistics team also assured the purchase and delivery of motorcycles for new FSU agents and decentralized coordinators.

Audit

In preparation for the upcoming MPO audit, members of the central staff of the MPO conducted an unannounced pre-audit of the Debt-for-Nature program. CO Administrative staff participated. Three main facets were examined: human resources, logistics, and finances and accounting.

Team Building

Along with the Program Director, the CO administrative team organized a team building session for the CO Debt-for-Nature staff. The event occurred during a two-day period in February, enlisting the services of a facilitator; two representatives from the central WWF-Madagascar Program Office also participated. The objective was to reinforce a common vision and shared understanding of the goals (and how to obtain them) of the Debt-for-Natures's two projects. Focal points included examination of each person's terms of reference as well as the CO organizational structure.

Following one of the major recommendations of the team building session, the structure and organization of the Debt-for-Nature program were improved. Changes included the establishment of a consultative committee composed of the program Director, Administrator, Technical Advisor and two National Coordinators as well as adjusting the terms of reference for members of the logistics team.

Budget Shortfall

The Debt-for-Nature program's two projects have different termination dates, despite the fact that they operate as one at the field level. In order to solve this dilemma, a proposal to extend the APN Project for two years so that it ends at the same time as the FSU Project was formulated and submitted to the MPO and WWF-US for discussion. The overall goal of the proposal is to establish and implement a fund raising strategy in the very near future.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations for the Next Reporting Period

Project staff would like to thank USAID for their generous grant (number 687-A-00-98-00029-00) which has made a significant contribution to forest conservation and sustainable use in Madagascar. Some conclusions and recommendations regarding Project activities are offered below.

4.1. Activity Targets not Attained and Why

Fourteen of the nineteen semester targets were fulfilled or surpassed (see Sections 2 and 3 above). However, five targets were not fully attained:

- c) *Finalize at least two more village forest management plans and submit them to the Ministry of Waters and Forests for approval*

This target was attained at 50%. Work on finalizing a second plan did occur during the semester, although the plan remains to be completed. Non-attainment of this objective can be attributed to too many demands on the CO technical team's time.

- f) *Finalize and facilitate signing of at least two management contracts*

This should have occurred at the Antsiraka and Tolongoina sites. At Antsiraka, the team was loathe to move forward on the contracts as alternative livelihood activities had not yet been implemented. The fear was that if forest harvesting began, too many villagers would be attracted to the activity, yet the economic benefits from selective, artisanal logging can only support a limited number of woodcutters. At Tolongoina, the reason for the lack of progress was less apparent. Possibly it was due to a lack of organization on the field team's part or perhaps the team did not see this as a priority activity. In any case, implementation of the agreement signed with the GELOSE unit of the National Environmental Office should improve this situation during the following semester. **Recommendation:** The importance of this activity should be clearly communicated to field teams during the second semester of 2000; an emphasis should be placed on achieving results in this domain.

- j) *Implement and monitor the management plan for the Farafara (at Tsitongambarika) village forest*

The woodcutters at Farafara were not willing to begin work on selective, artisanal logging foreseen in the management plan due to a lack of start-up funds: they want to be paid for their work as soon as it's done instead of waiting for the sawn timber to dry and to be sold at a higher price on the local market. **Recommendation:** During the CO technical team field trip planned for August, a solution to this problem needs to be found and should be implemented as soon as possible (i.e., during the second semester of 2000).

- l) *Train selected Central Office staff in environmental impact assessment methods*

This activity did not occur as a suitable trainer has yet to be identified. Some progress did occur in identifying potential trainers through consultation with an AID-financed project with expertise in this area. **Recommendation:** The CO technical team should pursue the various leads regarding potential trainers in EIA methods and should make a concerted effort to organize the training for the second half of 2000.

p) Continue the work of recording the latitude and longitude of points along the forest reserve boundaries using Geographic Positioning System (GPS) instruments

In the three of eight of technical quarterly reports received from the field teams during the semester (at the time of writing this report), this activity was not mentioned. Perhaps it occurred during the second half of the semester (as the three reports all covered the first quarter). **Recommendation:** During second semester field trips, the CO technical team needs to encourage field teams to achieve results in this area.

4.2. Other Obstacles Encountered and Measures Taken to Address them

Illegal Harvesting, Forest Clearing and Wildfires

Although, on one hand, the situation of villagers improving monitoring of the FR at Antsiraka is encouraging, on the other hand the continued illegal cutting, forest clearing and wildfires is disquieting. This phenomena mainly points to the fact that behavioral change with regard to forest resources is difficult to attain and is a long-term process. The field team at Antsiraka maintains that, until economic alternatives are implemented for the villagers in the area (especially the woodcutters), it will be nearly impossible to eradicate illegal forest use. (N.B. This situation persists at the other sites, though, perhaps, to lesser degrees; the Tsitongambarika team is also adamant in voicing the need for the Project to implement alternative economic activities in order to reduce forest clearing).

Recommendation: The key element for solving this problem is implementing small village-based projects; as always, an accent should be placed on this activity for the second semester of 2000 (and ensuing semesters).

4.3. Lessons Learned

Two principal lessons were learned this semester. The first is that the participatory forest management approach can lead to village empowerment with regard to forest management. This is illustrated by the three village associations at Antsiraka who are becoming increasingly active in managing the forests in their territories. Prior to Project implementation, the seizure of illegally cut wood by villagers was virtually unheard of.

The second lesson, though perhaps not new, is that differing levels of comprehension with regard to the Project vision exist among Project personnel. This was especially evident regarding village territory zoning activities: while the CO technical team thought the field teams had a solid understanding of this endeavor, it was clear during field trips that confusion existed. This underscores the need for the CO technical team to visit the field sites as many times as possible during the year in order to provide technical support (explanations, help in field-level applications, etc.). It also points to the fact that some of the Project field agents do not have the required level of technical competence to effectively implement participatory forest management.

4.4. Prospects for Accomplishment of the Project's Objectives

There are no changes under this heading with respect to the last semester report. Again, prospects for the accomplishment of the Project's objectives remain good. Villagers at all six sites demonstrate a willingness and an interest in managing the forests in their territories, especially protecting these forests from outsiders. However, as has been highlighted in previous reports, participatory forest management is a long-term process that requires diligence and perseverance on the part of Project staff. This fact, coupled to the slow pace of rural life at the Project field sites implies that expectations regarding the

speed with which Project goals and targets can be met need to be scaled back.

4.5. Activity Targets for Next Reporting Period

- a) Continue work on formulating draft village forest management plans and presenting and discussing these plans with villagers,
- b) Finalize at least two more village forest management plans and submit them to the Ministry of Waters and Forests for approval,
- c) Continue work on zoning village territories including taking GPS coordinates of territory boundaries,
- d) Demarcate and inventory at least two village forests,
- e) Finalize and facilitate signing of at least two management contracts,
- f) Continue work on preparing and submitting (to Central Office) small and micro village-based development project request documents,
- g) Implement and monitor the management plan for the Farafara (at Tsitongambarika) village forest,
- h) Conduct review training sessions for field teams in communication techniques,
- i) Train selected Central Office staff in environmental impact assessment methods,
- j) Implement at least two small village-based development projects,
- k) Conduct a meeting of the Project's steering committee,
- l) Continue the work of recording the latitude and longitude of points along the forest reserve boundaries using Geographic Positioning System instruments,
- m) Place an accent on work on village territory boundaries, zoning of village territories and formulating *dina* (traditional, local agreements) in at least one village per site,
- n) Continue work on establishing village-level forest management associations and committees,
- o) Write and submit semester reports to WWF-International, WWF-US and the FSU donor, and
- p) formulate, translate and submit 2001 work plans for the six Project sites and the CO staff to the Debt-for-Nature program donors.